

The SL Arts and Life Magazine

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Quantamis
with
Traci Nubalo

Bryn Oh
with
Jami Mills

MicroFiction
by **Crap Mariner**

the
Rose
Theatre





Editor's Note

february

Deningun Parte:Editor

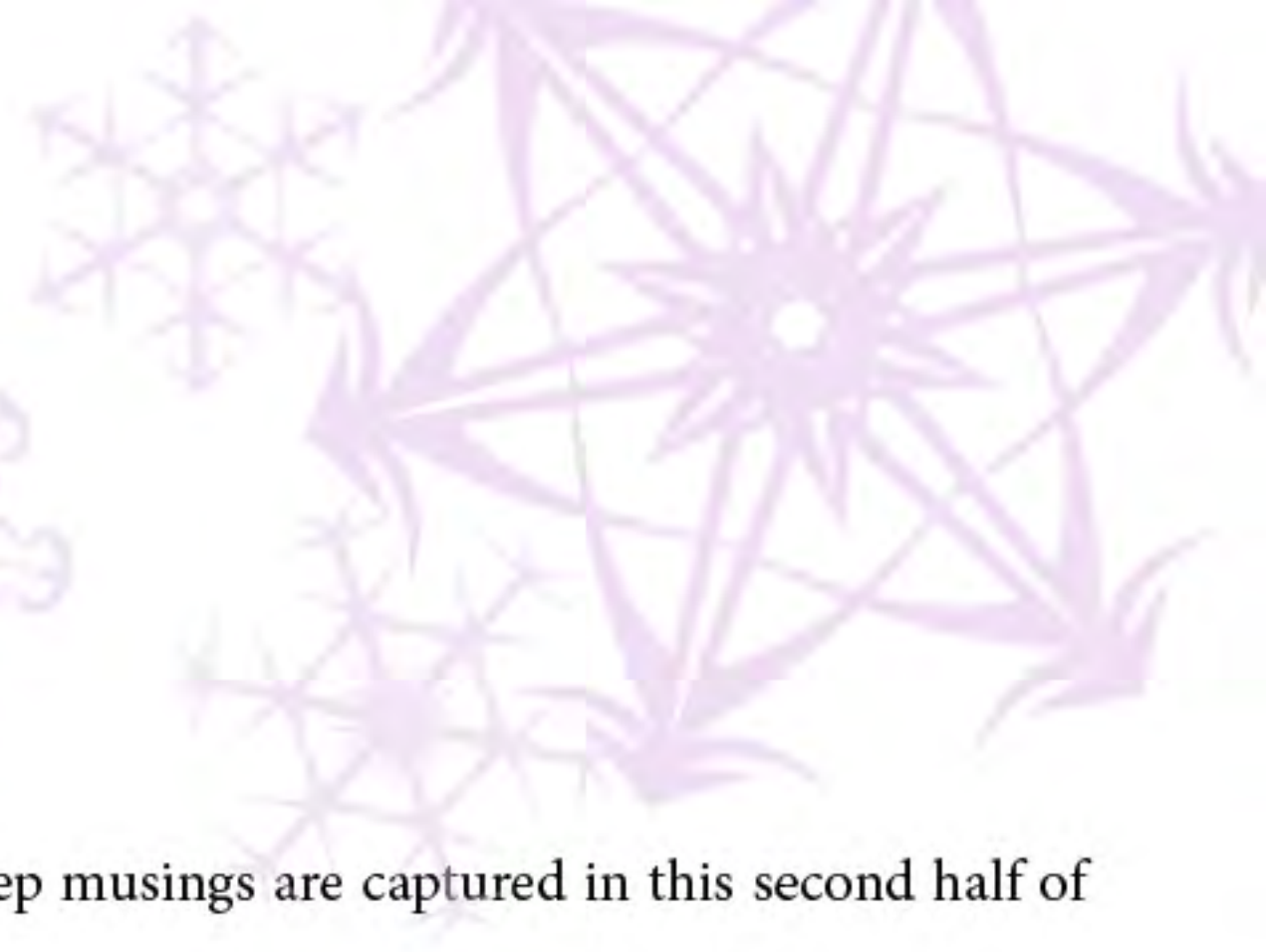
Dear Readers,

Writing this note finds me in the part of the rez production cycle that fascinates me most. For every issue, this note is the last piece of copy written, and it happens when all other articles are ready for layout and the photography is done. Up to this point, I've been watching the issue unfold, as all the contributions roll in. As soon as I turn in this last piece of copy, my attention shifts to housekeeping and then it's on to thinking about next month's issue.

But as the rest of us look forward to the future, the new issue is in the hands of our capable art director, Blue Tsuki. To me this is like waiting for Christmas, and a bit like what I imagine letting go of a grown child must be like. I have seen all the ingredients Blue gets to work with to give rez its look and feel, and to put together the final product. I can only guess what it will look like. Just before the publication date the pages of the finished issue appear, and every time it seems to me that rez never looked this good.

This month's ingredients include two articles touching on the most impressive SL build I know, the Rose Theatre. Cat Boccaccio's questionnaire features the curator of the Rose Theatre's art galleries, Kylie Sabra. My own feature piece explores the same institution in more depth, showing the ever-evolving concept behind it and exploring its inner workings.

This month's issue also contains the anticipated concluding installment of Jami Mills' piece on the amazing and original work of Bryn Oh. Bryn's



splendid imaginings and deep musings are captured in this second half of Jami's in-depth interview.

The final feature for this month is written by Traci Nubalo and takes the reader into the work, life and love of the passionate and popular singer/songwriter Quantamis Navarathna.

In our opinion section, Jullianna Juliesse continues her thoughts on social faux pas in SL, this time capturing her observations on SL Dominants. For those unfamiliar with the D/s (Dominance and submission) scene, I should note that the odd capitalization in the article follows the conventions of the SL D/s world, and is used to highlight the relationships between Dominants and submissives. Have a look and imagine what life is like in a society where there is a distinct difference between "you" and "You".

In my own column, Plan B, I think about societal stereotypes in SL, what our profiles say about us and how the perception of behavior depends on the environment.

Finally, we bring you a piece of imaginative microfiction by Crap Mariner and a creative poem "Dick" by Hope Merryman.

Enjoy!
Deningun Parte
Editor in Chief



CAT BOCCACCIO

Second Life Photography

Cat's Beach Gallery
Cat's Gallery at Avalon
Synergy Gallery
EAST Galleries
Art Center Gualdo





Cat Questionnaire: **Kylie Sabra**

Cat Boccaccio: Interrogator

This month, artist and curator of The Rose Galleries, Kylie Sabra, bravely answers Cat's 14 leading questions.

SL age: 2 years, 3 months

SL activity: Curator of The Rose Galleries at The Rose Theatre, Graphic Artist, Builder, Sim Designer and Dancer (Ballet & Belly-dance)

RL location: Washington State

In-your-own-words bio: I have a full life in SL that is a compliment to my RL-- one does not supplant the other. I am quite simply a compulsive creator. I am in a loving relationship and I live my dreams here. I am mother, lover, explorer.

1. What in SL has brought you the most happiness?

Art. To capture the beauty of SL in a lasting expression in the form of a picture brings such pleasure. I strive to pass to the viewer the deep emotion I experience in my work.

2. What has given you the most sadness?

I have had two wonderful relationships here and am now in my third. It is the loss of love that I think strikes the harshest blow, whether it be a spouse or a child.



3. How would you describe your home in SL?

Jake and I have our apartment at Angel Manor at The Rose Theatre, which is the epitome of elegance. We adore it, but that is life very much in the public eye, with a sim traffic count hovering around 5,000 a day. So we have our sweet escape--S&S Ranch--where we keep our horses and burgeoning collection of meeroos.

4. Who in SL do you admire most?

Oh, that is easy. Kaya Angel. Not only is the man a freakishly talented designer and builder, he's an amazing individual. I've not known someone with such

depth of character. He never ceases to surprise me.

5. What character trait do you have in SL that is furthest from your RL personality?

I don't. There is no magical demarcation that occurs when I hit the log-in button. I'm still me. I respond in SL in exactly the same way I do in RL.

6. Which character trait did you leave behind in RL?

None.

7. What is your weakness when it comes to spending your Linden dollars?

Building materials. Dance animations. Truly, I think I have every top-notch ballet and bellydance animation in SL and I'm constantly searching for more. Oh, yes! Clothes.

8. What is your favorite place in Second Life, and why?

Our Ranch. Yes, there are many beautiful sims, but I built this one. This is where I come for peace. I love to explore, because that is the subject of my art, but you'd be surprised how much of a homebody I am.

9. What scares you the most in (or about) Second Life?

I have no fear. That is what TP, mute and ban buttons are for.

10. What is your secret pleasure in SL?

Dance! Not club dance, but beautiful, sensual dance. I can (and do) do it for hours -- with or without audience.

11. What would it take to drive you out of Second Life?

RL financial or health crisis. I'm here to stay.

12. What one word would you use to describe the art community in SL?

Convolutd.

13. What are you most proud of in SL?

My art. Yes. I really am proud of my work.

14. If you built a sim from scratch with unlimited resources, what would it be called?

Paradise Found..



The Rose Galleries:

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Angel%20Manor/104/151/29>

Visit Kylie Sabra on flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/74028215@N06/6672489669/in/photostream>

COMPLETE REGAL



THE ANGEL MANOR A

BY DENINGUN PARTE

My acquaintance with the Rose Theatre seems to have started twice. The first time my friend Kylie Sabra invited me to see her new gallery. We stood, chatted, looked at some of the art, and after Kylie logged off I walked around a bit. I saw just enough to realize I was in a large structure, and indeed Kylie had mentioned that the whole of it covered two full sims. But I did not stray beyond the galleries; I did not even go outside. I simply made a mental note to come back, because I wanted to keep current with Kylie's work as a curator.

Weeks later a new acquaintance mentioned the Rose Theatre to me again and

ART IMMERSION:



AND ROSE THEATRE

we went, again to the galleries, but also to dance in the ballroom. More importantly, this second time, we came in through the front door and the enormity of the place registered a little. On this second visit I understood that the Rose Theatre is much more than a gallery, and that I should seriously explore it.

It turns out that "explore" is an easy word to use, but a much harder thing to do, when it comes to the Rose Theatre. My exploration lasted a week, wandering aimlessly through the corridors of a magnificent and seemingly endless castle, never sure if I had been at a particular intersection before or whether I knew where a certain door would lead to. I found myself backstage in the

opera house without meaning to. I walked through the quarters of the "royal family" that inhabits Angel Manor, quite by accident. I stumbled across a stable and explored the grounds on horseback. Just getting my bearings in this park took me two days. As for seeing it all, I'm not sure if I'll ever have that much time.

A few things struck me on these excursions. One was an inexplicable sense of familiarity. I have seen many actual castles in RL, Blenheim Palace, the Louvre, Versailles, the Palacio Real, Aranjuez, Sanssouci, and the Prague Castle among them. I was not reminded of one particular place, but the sense of *deja vu* never left me. The rich immensity of the place made me want to meet the owner and creator, Kaya Angel. I was graciously invited to a long, easygoing conversation with him and Kylie Sabra in one of the many salons of the castle.

I did, of course, ask if the builds had any RL model, if they emulated a certain style, how strong the link to any existing RL architecture was. Kaya's answer was oddly in line with my own perceptions of the build. He wanted to



create a place that looked real in the sense that the structure, if built in RL, would in fact remain standing. Other things, like the scale of the build, were based on RL too. In fact, scale is very important to Kaya. He is



very sensitive to builds on "SL scale," with exaggerated dimensions that allow avatars to move without cameras going through walls. He managed to avoid building on the exaggerated SL scale mainly by building a

castle which even in RL would have very large rooms. This choice of theme allowed him to keep a natural scale, while at the same time permitting camera movement as avatars move through the build. The only ex-

ception to this natural-scale rule is found in the galleries, because presentation of oversize images simply works better in SL than presentation at any sort of "realistic" size. I had suspected that a build as rich and complex as the Rose Theatre was not created from scratch, but that there

must be a history. And there is.

Kaya explained how the Rose Theatre grew along with Second Life itself. The theatre was started four years ago, when SL was a different place. Then, venues were not as set in the way they function as they are



the way they function as they are today, and the general idea of creating community allowed for more diverse expression. The first incarnation of the Rose Theatre was a 1930s-style ballroom. Kaya observed that the ballroom would attract a certain group of people only, and so



to broaden the appeal, the venue lost its 1930s style and became bigger and more ornate. Live music was the next ingredient and a major factor in the development of the Rose Theatre. The stage lighting that worked well with the show became a new element of SL performance, and the Rose Theatre was pioneering it. The Rose Theatre became a performance venue with a strong emphasis on visual presentation. Adding a gallery was a logical extension of this concept.

Currently, the Rose Theatre build encompasses the Angel Manor as well. Both the Rose Theatre and the Angel Manor had existed on separate sims previously, and only in the present build were they combined into a single entity. While Kaya is constantly improving his builds, major changes happen about once a year, and the present two-sim build combining the Rose Theatre and Angel Manor is a very recent effort to keep things fresh for visitors. Incredible as it seems, even this magnificent place will, in time, outlive itself.

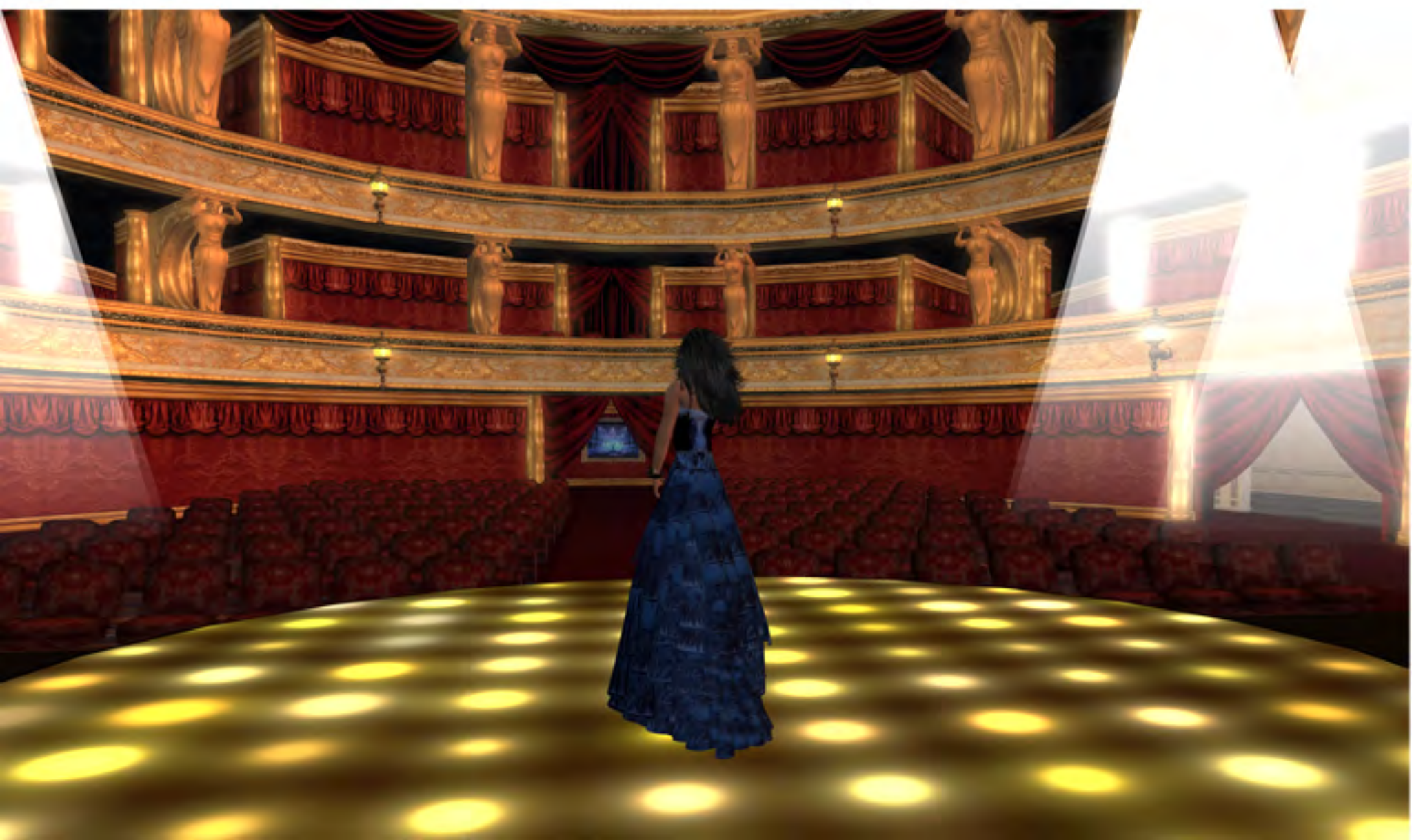
This present incarnation of the Rose Theatre and Angel Manor allows the visitor many different approaches,

simply because the sims are so diverse. I admit to spending most of my online time for several days on horseback and totally ignoring all other aspects of the build. Kaya says that is in line with his intentions, that people can come and find what gives them peace and what opens up their creative souls. For me, that was riding; someone else might prefer the galleries or the ballrooms, the soon-to-be-completed shops or a live show.

The huge scope of the Rose Theatre/Angel Manor project raises the question of who is involved in the construction and operations. The answer to that is surprising and un-

conventional, even by Second Life standards. The twin sims are operated by a Second Life family. Kaya Angel is the head of the family, the architect and builder. Kaya's younger sister, Kylie Sabra, manages the Rose Galleries, and the youngest sister, Kezzy Forwzy, oversees the operations of Angel Manor. The core Angel Family also contains an eccentric aunt, her Imperial Highness Findbhair McConaught. Others who are not part of this core family have more specialized roles, like managing weddings.

In SL, where even the largest projects are managed by volunteers with unpredictable schedules, a different ap-



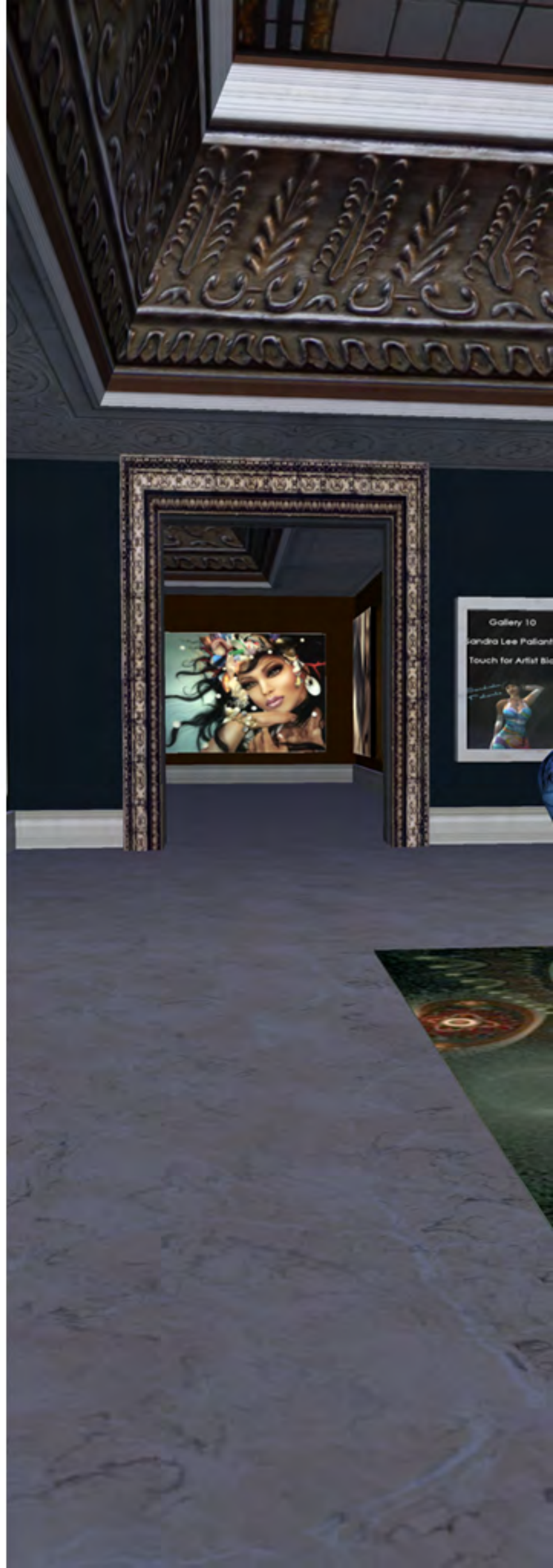


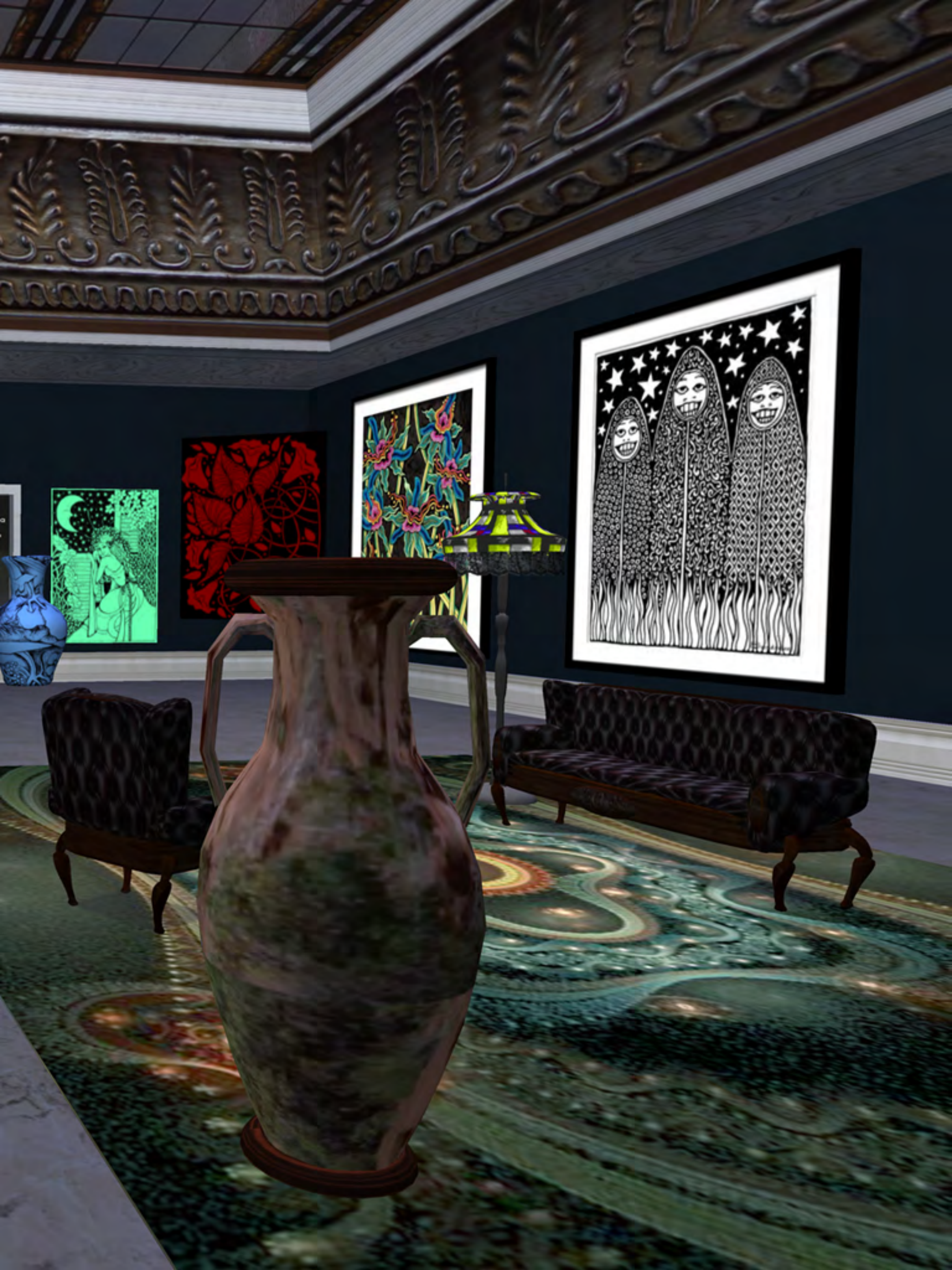
proach to management is often required. In the case of the Angel Family, Kaya encourages people to see a need and fill it rather than assigning roles in a top-down fashion. This voluntary nature of commitment is mirrored in many aspects of the operation of the Rose Theatre. I found a small example of this when visiting the furniture store in Angel Manor, where all the furniture that Kaya made for the build is on sale. I picked up for free a very well-stocked box of older furniture that Kaya no

longer sells, with the admonition to pass it forward. In a similar fashion, the entire two-sim project can be seen as Kaya's gift to the SL community as a whole, simply because he not only built the structures but also pays all of the tier out of his RL pocket. Once the tier is removed from the equation, it becomes possible to use all tips toward improving the venue and investing in performances and art. The system is so effective that even the galleries can manage to not charge the artists a

commission on the sales they make there.

Back home, and going over my notes, I have one question that only time will answer: Has the Angel Family taken its holistic approach to the presentation of art in a virtual space as far as it will go, or will it find a way to go beyond what is already there? Mind you, I was sorely tempted to get off my digital horse and feed the virtual ducks the scraps from my RL breakfast.





ALANIS GALLERY SENSUAL IMAGES

XAARA (75, 206, 24)-ADULT

EROTIC PHOTOGRAPHY, PAINTINGS
AND DRAWINGS BY LEADING RL
ARTISTS



Alanis is the only place in SL where you will find provocative and challenging images from world renowned exponents of erotic art such as Morey, Tisbury, Chappuis, Weltman and Wack.



Located at the heart of beautiful Xaara, Alanis comprises a superbly designed series of linked exhibition spaces and a garden running down to the sea, where you can socialise and meet with the famous Living Statues, the Alanis Angels.



Nearby in the Xaara Arts and Shopping District are several other high class art galleries affiliated to Alanis.



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Part Two: Oh Canada! The Artistry of Bryn Oh

Photos and Text:
Jami Mills





“O Canada! Beneath our shining
skies, may stalwart sons and
gentle maidens rise.” (Canadian
National Anthem)

A gentle maiden has certainly risen in Canada. Bryn Oh's alter ego lives and toils as a professional painter beneath the shining skies of Toronto, but we know her best for her startling and beautiful inworld 3-D installations and machinimas, among the very best SL has to offer. We should all be grateful when Bryn sets down her palette and brushes and picks up her mouse, and we are particularly appreciative that she has taken time from her demanding schedule to share her interesting perspective with our readers.

photo: From The Rabbicorn Story, “Soon she had found the tower's pearl...in the form of a Ruble girl...Standing alone in a vine's embrace...somehow sad but exuding grace”

[Editor's Note: This is the second installment of Jami Mills' exploration of the creative spirit of Bryn Oh, one of the premiere artists in SL, known for her fanciful and dramatic 3-D multi-media installations. The first part of our series, “Murderous Whimsy – The Artistry of Bryn Oh,” appeared in the January issue of rez. We hope you enjoy the continuation of this wonderful peek into Bryn's world.]



From Willow "...Caught and dismantled today...I look at your remnants in sorrow"

JM: One of your fellow Canadians, Joni Mitchell, wrote of herself, "I am a lonely painter....I live in a box of paints..." You have explored themes of aloneness in your work, yet you are also an active part of the SL artist community, collaborating with other SL artists (as you did in The Path), and serving on the LEA, among other things. Describe if you would how you balance creative solitude with community involvement here in SL.

BO: That has been quite difficult actually. I have for some time been somewhat of a recluse in my Second Life. For years, most of my time online was spent exclusively building things while ColeMarie Soleil chatted to me. Building is my passion. When I was asked to be in the LEA, my first reaction was to say no, because potentially a whole bag of worms can open when you get involved with something like that. Politics, gossip and trolls. But in the end, it was an honour to be asked, and to be honest, I have some philosophical differences over virtual world art with some of the members, and I don't want them to make decisions unopposed. So mostly I am still trying to figure out how to balance them.



JM: The Path is a collaborative work you conceived of, in the Surrealist “exquisite corpse” style, where one artist starts the piece and hands it off mid-stream to the next artist, and so on. You assembled seven other gifted SL artists and achieved something quite diverse and spectacular. Tell us about your experience collaborating, and do you plan on further collaborations in the future?

BO: The Path was a wonderful experience for me. It is fun working with the right artists because they get so excitable and tend to have no pretentious egos. Each was really positive and supportive of the others, and the

high skill level of each artist pushed everyone to constantly try to improve their own work. They really all are masters in some area of creation. Colin Fizgig and Marcus Inkpen created great engaging characters, Maya Paris and Scottius Polke made interactive and much needed lighthearted works for an overall balance. Desdemona Enfield is one of Second Life's top scripters and her art partner Douglas Story excels in video and editing. Claudia222 Jewell creates wonderful organic builds with exceptional texturing, and Rose Borchovski is a master storyteller with spontaneous creativity. I could easily go through

The artists of The Path: Bryn Oh, Colin Fizgig, Marcus Inkpen, Desdemona Enfield, Douglas Story, Maya Paris, Claudia222 Jewell, Scottius Polke and Rose Borchovski

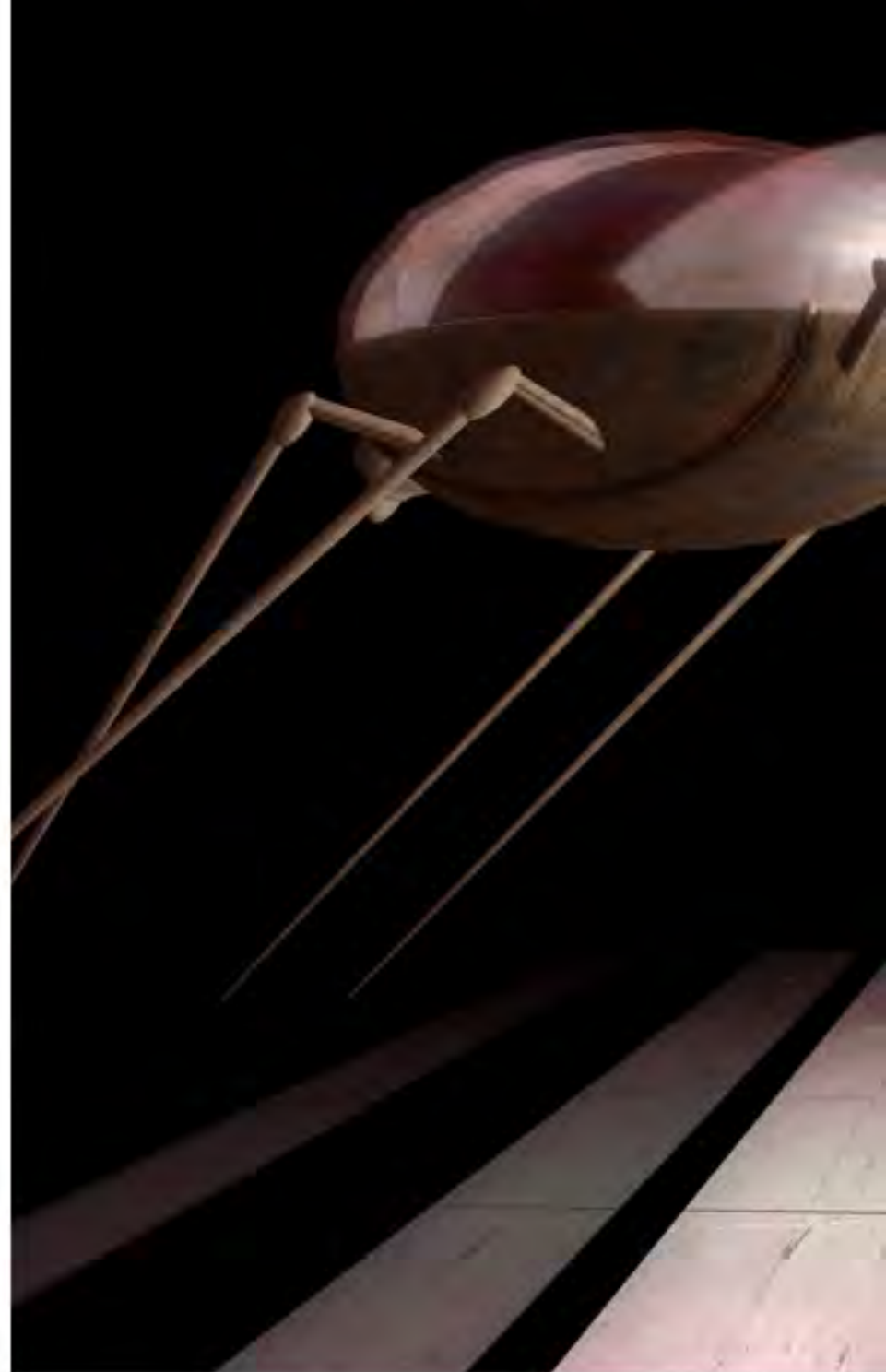


The Path

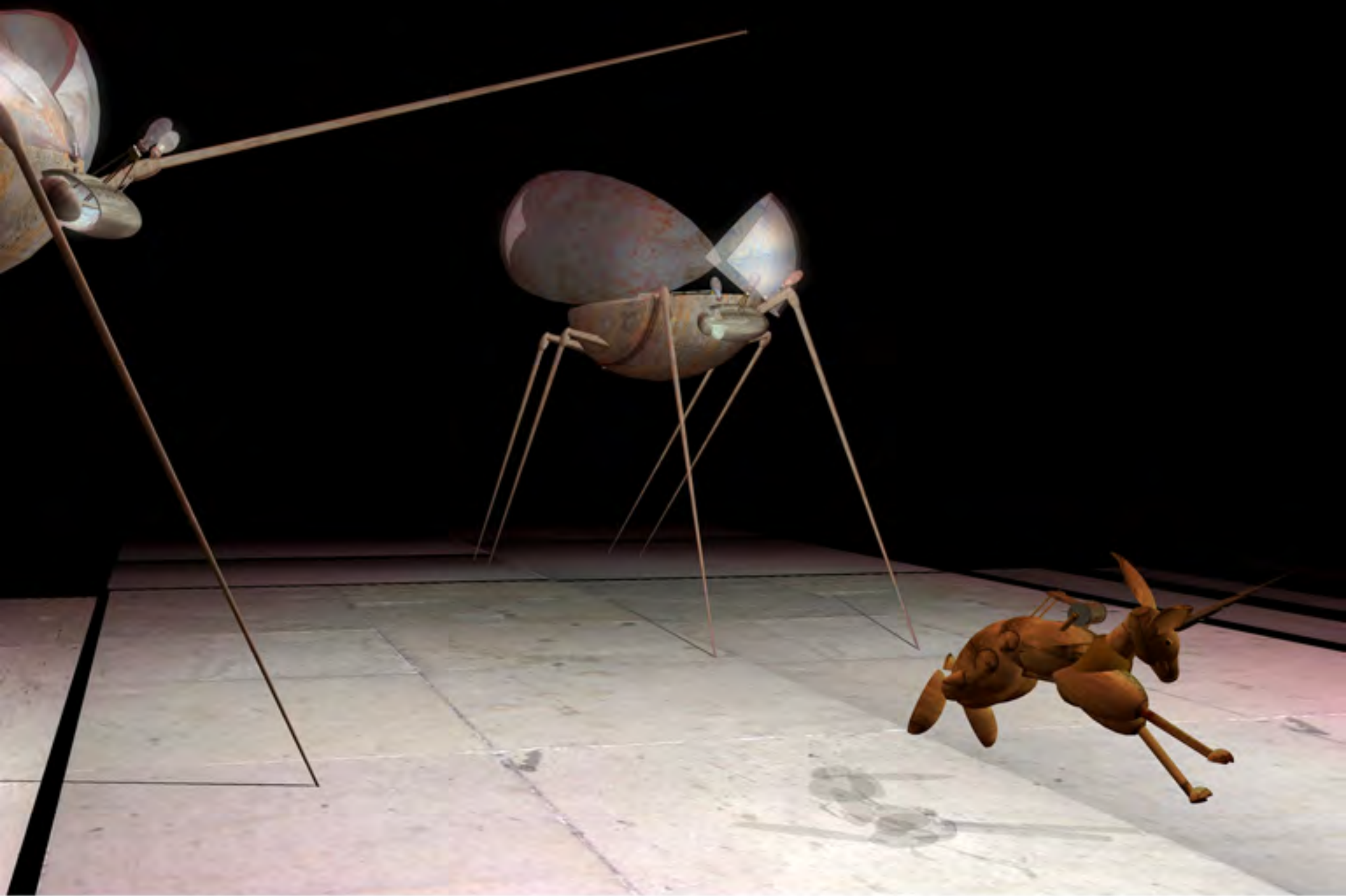
each again and again naming different advanced skills they possess. What makes The Path a great example of a successful collaboration is that each artist was able to maintain their own signature look while trying to create an overall harmony that didn't attempt to overshadow the others. Each scene was unique and engaging for the viewer and capable of being an art exhibit on its own. I personally think The Path is one of the best collaborations ever created in a virtual world, and it was a great honour for me to show with these exceptional talents.

JM: Your first avatar was a large white moth. Insect-like creatures (some reminiscent of The Garden of Earthly Delights) populate your work, and your main character in Rabbi-corn is a cross between a rabbit and a unicorn. Describe your fascination with the animal world.

BO: When I was a child, we moved from the bustling city of Toronto to a farm in the countryside. We had 250 acres of forest, swamp, cornfields and fields of grass and wildflowers. We were what real farmers called hobby farmers. We bought some cows, sheep and goats. A horse and chickens. Our pigs wandered freely



in the summer, as well as the ducks and turkeys. I discovered that animals were not just pictures in children's books. I named each one and all had different personalities. Some were playful, others were skittish or bullies. Some cows would get hyper when I walked in the fields and would prance around me for a while. I would get them apples from an old orchard on our land and watch their incredibly long tongues as they rolled the apples endlessly in their mouths trying to crush them. I



From The Rabbicorn Story, "So the Rabbicorn ran as fast as she could...past some guards and into the woods"

would go deep into our woods and sit quietly by a log. All the wild animals would become silent when I arrived, but after some time, they would accept me and go about their daily lives. I would pull back bark from my log and see what the ants and centipedes were up to. I am not so fond of spiders, but some really are beautiful and their webs are works of art if you just sit and look at them for a while. We lived there five

years, then came back to the city, but what I loved most about animals was the combined simplicity and complexity to them; they have a purity that doesn't really exist in my city life.

JM: You are very sensitive to the impacts that sound and music have on your work. I'm recalling the minimalist soundtrack to your machinima, Gretchen and Teddy, and the mood it created. And you match your musical

selections perfectly with your visual representations. How you do approach the aural aspects of your work and how important are sound and music to your artistic vision?

BO: Ambient sound to me is extremely important for immersive environments; to me, it is as important to the work as its composition, colour theory, texturing or physical build. But sound must be subtle in such a way that the viewer is not overtly aware of the ambient sounds that are affecting their mood. In many cases, you don't need to use explicit sounds or images to achieve the emotion you would like. For example, you called Anna's Many Murders terrifying in an earlier question. Yet, in the actual artwork, there was neither blood nor violence, and in most cases it just showed the moments before or perhaps the threat of impending violence. I didn't need blood and gore to make you call it terrifying. Sound is similar, in that you don't need to use a woman screaming if you want anxiety in your viewer, but rather just small things in the background like wind or creaking wood can draw forth a building sense of anxiety in the viewer, if that is the mood

you are seeking. But you can use sound in other ways too. In Rusted Gears, I tried to combine the music with the text to slow down the breathing of the viewer as they watched the machinima. It was a test to see if we would subconsciously slow our own breathing to match the rhythm in a work. I am not sure if it was successful for everyone, but it did work for me. I found myself changing my breathing due to the tempo, and as a result becoming more immersed and somehow hypnotized.

JM: Your use of light and kinetics is also equally impressive, and the textures you use are stunning. Your work obviously requires a considerable amount of technique. How did you learn to master these techniques? Do you create your own native textures for your builds?

BO: In hindsight, my education was perfectly tailored to working in virtual worlds. I studied art in a Canadian art college as well as in Florence, Italy. I then went to another college and studied Softimage computer animation and Zbrush. I became a painter and so never really needed to use my computer animation skills, but they were there for



From The Rabbicorn Story, "A scientist in a lab...built a Rabbicorn from things she had...from Tesla coils and a music box...parts of her gramophone, and fur from a fox"

when I came to Second Life. But generally, when I come across something I wish to do, I will simply sit down and try to learn how. I don't like to have to rely on others. So I had to learn things like working with scripts, filming machinima, sound and texturing. I have become pretty good with Zbrush, and have Blender sitting on my computer calling out to me. But really you can spend all your time just learning while getting nothing done if you let yourself. Yes, I do make my own textures, but I have no problem using textures I find if they are of good quality.

JM: Your work has such a sculptural quality to it. You've translated some of it into beautiful, hardbound books available for purchase in RL. Have you ever attempted to bring your life-like characters across the digital divide and create real world sculptures of them? I can see your character Rabbicorn sitting on my office desk.

BO: Funny you ask that. I just met someone last week who has offered to help with the gears inside sculptures I create. In my first life, I have been making encaustic and wire insects with music boxes in them. I

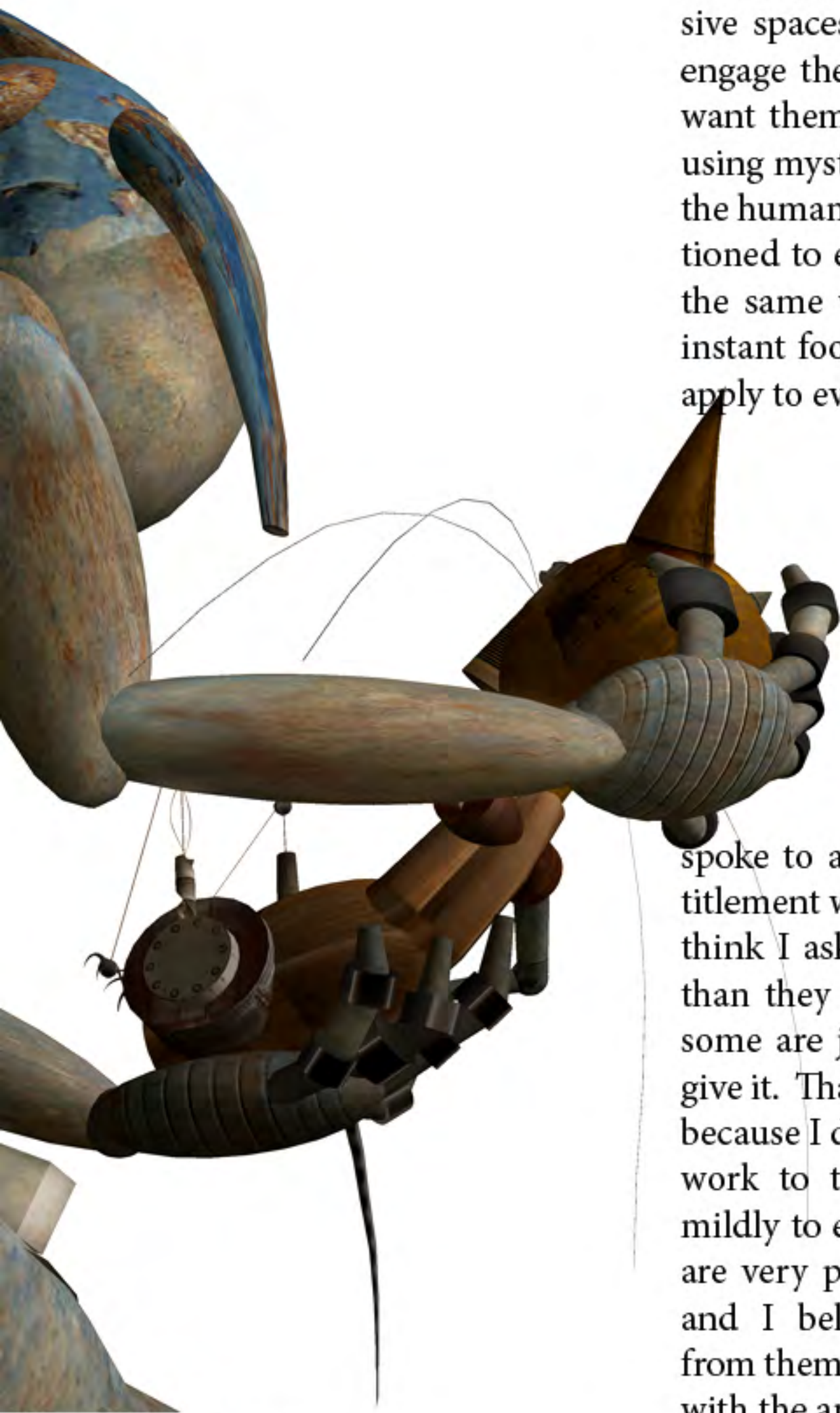
have tried to make tiny elaborate gears inside of these sculptures, but I just can't get them to run well for long periods of time. Anyway, I have always wanted to make a Rabbicorn or Daughter of Gears sculpture with all the little turning parts, and after meeting this person, I may have someone who can help. But yes, other than that, I do have some wire and wax insects with music boxes.

JM: You challenge your audience. Some of your poems, though set in nursery rhyme format, are surprisingly dense and nuanced, and climbing the tower you built for The Daughter of Gears is not an easy proposition either, yet you reward those willing to put in the effort with thought provoking textual imagery and visual treats. Your work certainly requires a degree of commitment from the viewer. In this world of sound bites and Twitter, do you ask more from your audience than it is able to give?

BO: I remember about six months ago, an artist in Second Life telling me "I don't like to have to do work to see art" after visiting some of my builds. I know there are some who feel this way, but I personally believe that there is an important sense of achievement if an artwork challenges



From The Carousel of Dreams and Sorrows



, the character "Merbot"

you in some way and you are able to overcome it. It is an integral part of the art style I do for creating immersive spaces. As an artist, I want to engage the viewer with my work. I want them to become immersed by using mystery and narrative. I think the human race may slowly be conditioned to expect instant information the same way McDonald's provides instant food, but I don't think it will apply to everything. The artist I

spoke to already had a sense of entitlement when it came to art. I don't think I ask more from my audience than they are able to give; probably some are just not willing or able to give it. That really doesn't bother me, because I don't want to dilute my artwork to the extent that it appeals mildly to everyone. I have fans who are very passionate about my work, and I believe that passion comes from them engaging on a higher level with the art.

JM: I'm sure many of our readers would be interested to know that you have been a very active blogger for several years

<http://brynoh.blogspot.com/>.

How big a role does your blog play in your SL experience?

BO: I began the blog as a means to keep a record of things Bryn was up to. Mostly I just use it to show new things I am working on or just news of opening and closings. I do a blog post once a week or so and one day it will be a nice archive of my work.

JM: Many machinima artists would be envious of your refined technique. You have been quite prolific (I count at least 40 machinima referenced on your blog). The medium lends itself so beautifully to your work. You uploaded Bryn Oh and Mr. Lightbulb on December 17, 2008. Was it your first and how did you discover the medium?

BO: Yes, that was my first machinima. Someone told me about Fraps screen capture and so I downloaded a free version. I tested it out, then thought I might like to film some of my narratives. It just grew from there.



JM: What specific hardware and software do you use in your machinimas?

BO: I use a Space Navigator 3-D mouse and fraps screen capture. I then edit in Sony Vegas. I do my



The Tower (photo provided by the artist)

sound work in Audacity and Sound Forge. I use VLC media player and translate the large machinima to smaller ones for uploading using Any Video Converter, which translates very accurately.

JM: You have spoken of the transitory nature of your SL creations, forewarning your audience that once your installations are gone, they may be gone forever. Do you see machinima as a way of archiving your works, or do

you see machinima as a natural evolution of your inworld art that stands on its own?

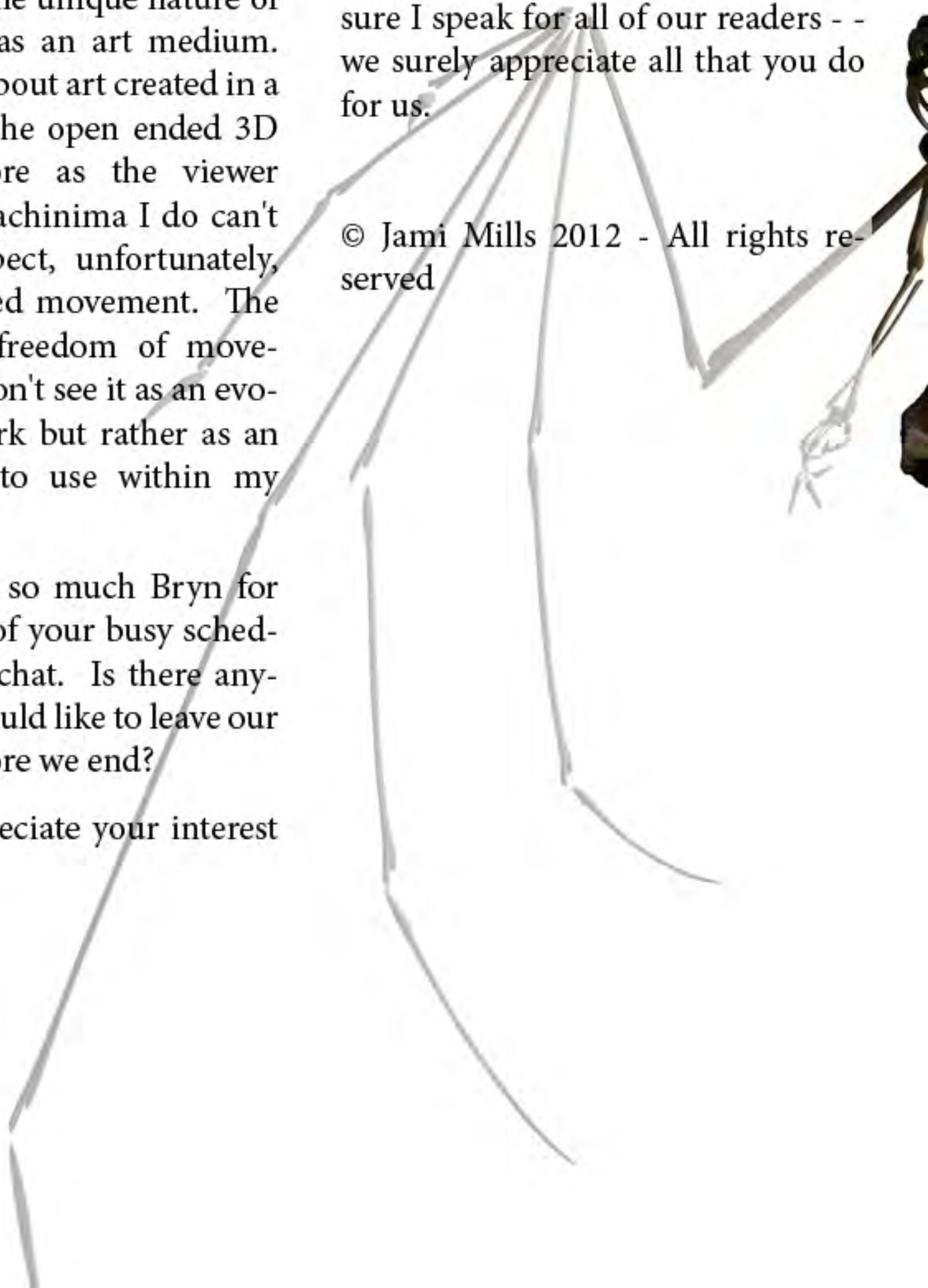
BO: I see machinima as both a means to archive as well as a medium on its own. But for me, it doesn't express the unique nature of a virtual world as an art medium. What is special about art created in a virtual space is the open ended 3D ability to explore as the viewer chooses. The machinima I do can't recreate this aspect, unfortunately, since it is scripted movement. The viewer has no freedom of movement. So no, I don't see it as an evolution of my work but rather as an additional tool to use within my builds.

JM: Thank you so much Bryn for taking time out of your busy schedule to have this chat. Is there anything else you would like to leave our readers with before we end?

BO: No. I appreciate your interest in what I do.

I cannot tell you what a pleasure it has been to get to know Bryn and her work, and I hope you enjoyed this glimpse into one of the truly gifted artists that make SL such a vital, creative place. Thank you Bryn for a truly wonderful interview. I'm sure I speak for all of our readers - - we surely appreciate all that you do for us.

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jami mills

photograph



at

Quantamis Navarathna: The Man Is In Love



by Traci Nubalo
photos by Jami Mills

He's wicked gorgeous in Second Life; he plays guitar like it's growing from his hands.

He sings from his heart to many hearts; his original songs are profound and meticulously-crafted love sonnets that grab the listener and demand to be listened to.

And he has a totally gorgeous, vivacious SL partner; a brilliant, witty, talented and beautiful wife. He loves her; and she certainly loves him.

Sound like a rock star lifestyle? Hardly.

Quantamis and Sedona Navarathna live in a picturesque lighthouse on a Second Life seashore. They live a quiet life, enjoying each other. They like to fly and sail together inworld in their spare time.

Several times a week the couple ventures from their nest and heads for a live music venue, where Quan leaves audiences breathless by performing his confident and creative set of passionate songs. This guy is one romantic man, a man with a heart brimming full of love. I know it from the way he writes. But I also know it because I've had the pleasure of chatting with him in SL.

Quan, you are regarded by many to be one of SL's most talented songwriters. What is your process - lyrics first, or riffs?

For me it is the melody that comes first, almost always. The melody will be going through my mind either briefly or for years as in the case of my new song, "Destiny". Eventually a thought in my mind appears to connect to that particular music; the lyrics just wrap themselves around it and then I just apply the final brushstrokes to the canvas.

A song, for example, like "Forever More" - can you tell us how that one came about? What was your thought process in writing those amazing lyrics?

Well, I just had this very simple melody in my head, and the guitar part was flowing perfect for it. I began to think about how our lives really are: our struggles, our illnesses, the days when everything just goes right and then those days when everything seems to be wrong.

In my case, despite everything I have a very close relationship with my friend and sweetheart, Sedona. What I am trying to say in the song is to just keep focused on the ones you hold dearest to your heart and everything will be okay no matter what.

Sometimes we're up, sometimes we're down,

sometimes we're lost sometimes we're found.

Sometimes our light has lost it's glow,

sometimes as bright as morning snow.

Whoa, my love. Yeah, my love.

I shall be with you forever more.

- "Forever More"

What's your RL performing background? Bands, solo work, etc.?

I have been in many different bands here in my city since out of high school. The first band I formed was called Silver and Ash. Kind of a country rock band with inspiration from the progressive country movement back then started by the music of Willie Nelson, Jerry Jeff Walker,

David Allen Coe, Waylon Jennings and many others.

Later I formed several other groups, including a rock and roll band. I also played a few solo gigs around town and played at many open mics as well; a very cool way to test out new songs.

Did you write originals back then? What were they like?

Oh yes, in my early groups I wrote and performed many of my original songs. There are a couple I wrote from then that I still perform to this day and some later ones that I converted into acoustic solo songs.

When and how did you discover SL?

In October of 2008, I was hanging around the house on the weekend and being bored. Was playing online games and someone sent me the link for SL. I just thought it was an interactive 3D video game and wow did I find it was so much more than that as time went by. I met someone inworld who would later become a very good friend and mentor to me and taught me the "do's and don't's" and what was really happening in this virtual world.



She later convinced me to try streaming my own music into SL. With some major help from Edward Lowell getting me streaming, I was up and running, though very rusty and scared to death at the time.

I had not written anything in about three years and barely ever picked up my guitar anymore. I must say at this time that it was definitely SL that began to inspire me to write again.

All the beauty and creativity around me began to affect me in a very positive way. Now with the help of Sedona I must say that every performance gets better.

You have an obvious love for the work of Cat Stevens. Can you share with us about that?

I was around sixteen when I was first turned on to Cat. My two older

sisters would play his records all the time and when they were gone I would play them as well. I put many scratches on them indeed. I must say his songwriting played a major part in my own process as I was writing my first songs.

Your guitar work is some of the most precise and interesting in SL, particularly your right hand (finger picking) style. How was this developed?

Well, as you may already know I play mostly by ear. I was taught my first guitar chord progressions by my grandfather and I would play rhythm guitar to his fiddle - blue grass music.

He kept trying to get me to use a pick but I kept going back to using my thumb; it just felt natural to me. As time went by my forefinger and middle finger started joining in and eventually became a part of this picking style which seems so natural to me. I actually keep my thumb nail as a pick and keep it filed and shaped a certain way.

TECH TALK

Quantamis: "This is my technical set up: I use an AKG C200B studio mic with phantom power that I put in through an ALESIS Multimix 8 Fire mixer.

Then the signal goes out into an external SIIG USB Soundwave 7.1 digital to USB port sound card.


The guitars are a pair of Sierra acoustic six strings. I also have an Ovation, but I've found that the Sierras give a better sound over the stream. One is black and one is blue and they have very well-working Barcus Berry electronic pick up systems.

My player is a Butt. I've found it to be more dependable and reliable; it also uses less memory than other well known players."



Your SL partner - your Valentine - is my good friend Sedona. In fact, I admire your relationship and feel that together you are making this a true Valentine piece. Could you fill us in? Please tell the readers about your relationship.

It all started with a dance. We were both at a venue and listening to a live performer when the owner of the venue suggested in local chat that we should dance together. After that one dance I wrote "Sedona Moon Dance"...



*“Tonight the moon
will rise, and lighten
the midnight sky,
and I’ll gaze into
your eyes, and our
dance shall begin.”*

...and we have been dancing together ever since. She is a major part of my success and helps me greatly. She's my close confidant and my friend as well. My Valentine.

Valentine's Day has always been one of my favorite holidays and is even more so now as I have my very special Valentine, Sedona. It has been a year since I asked Sedona to marry me, so it is also a very beautiful and special anniversary for us. This year has been incredible. She has been such a blessing to me in so many ways and the cool thing is we often think alike. We often say things at the exact same time and our sense of humor is so alike. We love many of the same things in SL, including sailing, pirating, gun battles and flying. Sedona is so sweet she doesn't mind me shooting her plane down repeatedly in air-to-air combat.

So I would like to say to all of you who have not found your very special Valentine, do not give up, he or she is out there waiting for you. Wishing everyone a very happy Valentine's day!



I was around you when your long-time RL canine friend Luke passed away. Can you tell us about Luke and your struggles with him in those last days?

I stumbled into an animal shelter in a small nearby town, just intending to look at the dogs up for adoption. I walked into the office and there was this guy trying to turn in this beautiful golden retriever, saying he could not keep the dog anymore. They were telling him they had no more room and he would have to fill out some papers and drop the dog at the sheriff's office where the dog would be euthanized immediately.

He asked me to hold the leash so he could fill the papers out. I sat down and petted Luke and looked into his eyes as he looked into mine. I knew that we were meant for each other, that I would rescue him and he would rescue me.

I shouted, "No! I will take this precious animal and give him a good home." The lady behind the desk began to say that I could not do that, but the guy said, "Why not? I haven't turned him in yet."

Well, Luke came home with me that day and became a huge inspiration to

me. We shared many good years together but he got very old and could no longer use his back legs because of hip dysplasia. I took care of him as an invalid and monitored his pain knowing that he would let me know when he was ready to go.

I was able to spend two more months with him and slept by his side as we just enjoyed each other's company. The time did come when he was ready to go and I knew it almost immediately. And thus, one of the hardest things any of us will ever have to do. He remains with me in spirit and will always be an inspiration to me of unconditional love.

That's a beautiful story, Quan. Thank you for sharing that with us. What is in your SL future, Q?

The future is unknown to me. I only know that now that my inspiration for writing has started flowing again, I am never going to stop, for it truly is a part of me and who I am. I hope to bring inspiration to others who hear my music here in Second Life and continue to stream my music here. I really owe so much to Sher Salmson of Spiritfire Entertainment for believing in me and for her continued support. With her at the helm

I believe the future holds many positive outcomes.



In an age where tearing up the dressing room is applauded, and where some performers elect to skip activities such as warming up vocally, or even tuning their guitar! - along comes Quan. He brings to us the heart of the true poet. Amid the many ups and downs of his life he seems to have landed on his feet creatively and is rapidly establishing himself as a major musician in SL.

He has a strong commitment to the craft of writing and performing; he's resolute in his willingness to do what it takes to offer his audience 100% every time he hits the stage. His guitar sings in chordal patterns which are emotionally perfect for his material.

I highly suggest that you take an hour and join other discerning music lovers at a Quan show. I guarantee that you'll totally enjoy his style.

And...the man is in love.

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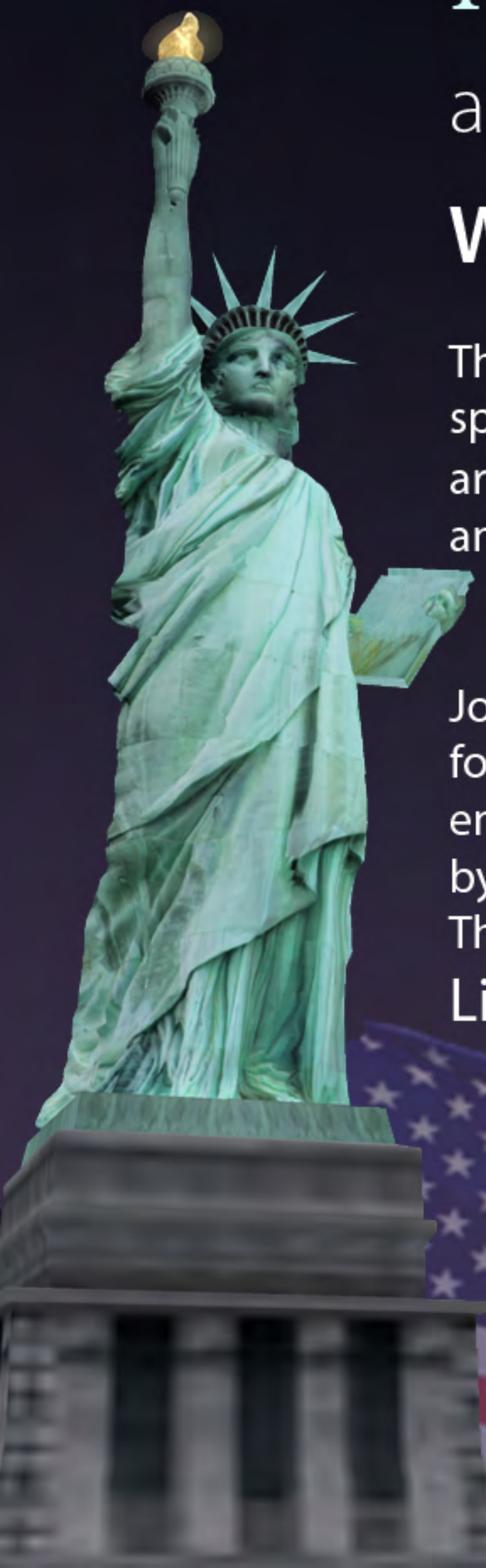
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The Girl Opines **You Don't Mean a Thing if You Aint Got that Bling**

Jullianna Juliesse:!!!!

Episode Two: In Which Our Heroine Falls Asleep and Has a Troublesome Dream After Too Much Mexican Food and Tequila

The brush was strangely still as a warm wind caressed its way across the savannah. I hunker down behind the low-lying scrub, binoculars in my free hand, rifle slung across my shoulder. Toto, I am so not in Kansas any more: This is dangerous country, and I am among strangers. The watering hole lurks close by, a mere hundred yards away, reflecting the noon sun's rays. I watch--and observe.

(OK, so maybe I should not have had that third margarita last night, but this is my rant. Indulge me, please.)

And then, I see them, prowling and resplendent in their black leather and with their long, black hair—a veritable vision of grandeur. This... this is what I have traversed the proverbial pixel plains to see: the doms of SL, each one more magnificent than the first. And so brilliantly named! Master Paine. The ones whose names are spelled with the silly, pretentious Greek characters no one can read or pronounce. Oh, and I spy Lord Thad and Sir Whips a Lot! How they make the weaker of us swoon and fall to our knees!

My courage and resolve are firm. I shall capture this, record it all for you, dear reader. Pulling out my notepad and camera, I wait.

The first thing I behold is the bling! Their chains, the diamond-studded belt buckles, the elaborate, glowing rings adorning nearly every finger. It all sparkles so brilliantly in the sunlight, attracting the subs' attention. And I fan myself at the sheer physical size of these fine specimens of pixel masculinity. These guys are as big as their egos!

At the edge of the watering hole, clad in little more than what amounts to latex dishtowels, the subs' pert noses rise in the air as the wind blows the overwrought scent of domly Aramis their way. Thrusting their 38GG breasts forward, they are all clearly on their best behavior—intent on scoring the best mate, the dommiest dom of all.

I can only imagine what his stamp collection back home at the dungeon looks like.

“Oh sir,” says one, “I am the most obedient and submissive of all. Surely you will find me the most pleasing.”

“But Lord,” another purrs, “I shall indulge your every wish, no matter what it is.”

“Master,” exclaims a third, “You may eat my young!” (“Eat her young,” I think. WTF?)

The doms circle in, equally as eager to impress, to somehow propagate their genetic imprint.

“I had five slaves polish my bling and lick my boots before venturing to this watering hole,” notes Master Paine, who appears to be the walking equivalent of a disco ball, so blinding is the bling. Two subs wander up from the

watering hole to preen before him, writhing on the ground at his feet.

“That may be fine, Master Paine,” snorts Sir Whips A Lot, his anthracite mane blowing in the breeze, “but surely I am most dominant of all.” Sir Whips points behind him to his ladies, who whinny in adoration.

One, two, three, four... five! Geez, the dude has a freaking herd! I can only imagine what his stamp collection back home at the dungeon looks like.

From my cowering place in the brush, I take it all down, scribbling furiously on my pocket notepad. A large shadow looms over me, and I look



YOU DON'T MEAN A THING IF YOU AINT GOT THAT BLING:
Our heroine on a recent fact-finding expedition.

up to see if the sun has gone behind a cloud. It has not; it is, in fact, Lord Thad. He towers over me, the uber-Gorean master. He looks down, an imperious sneer on his five-o-clock shadow face. And the shadow he casts is more vast than the vastest solar eclipse.

“And so my little one, what brings you here,” he inquires. “Shall we return to my lair to discuss how I may train you to serve my every need?”

“Uh no, I am just a writer on assignment,” I reply.

“A writer on assignment . . . what?” Lord Thad sneers and suddenly looks irritated.

“Just a writer on assignment.” I close my notepad and tuck it, and the camera, in my bag.

“You impertinent, unworthy creature,” he bellows. “When a Master addresses you, you will refer to him as ‘Sir.’ You are not worthy of my training collar!”

Lord Thad continues on and on, spewing more and more of the same sort of nonsense. I become aware of a nagging need to find the nearest ladies room.

And no, it is not to puke.

And then I awaken, safe in my bed. While I feel as if a hamster is doing the fox-trot on my tongue, I do manage somehow to stumble to said ladies room and draw a hot, steamy bubble bath. And then, dear reader, I spend the next hour soaking off the dust—and slime—of the watering hole.



Plan B

The Fear of Teleporting

Deningun Parte

I have a friend who calls herself a profile junkie.

She reads them all, and is cruel in her own way. Her profile is a summary of placeholders of the stereotypical things that people say in their profiles. Like: "Collared and owned by.....and, in case of behavior problems with this boy/girl, contact...", or the quotes of famous people, the poems on love and how one attained it, the threats to enemies of the family or clan. Oh yes, it is repetitive. I share the habit. If I am in crowds, I read profiles, and I see it all the time. Profiles say a lot about us, and groups say even more than the profile text. The assumption is that we need our groups to stay in touch with the things that interest us. And so, a look at the groups gives a succinct summary of a person's Second Life.

Many of the profiles I see tell me that a person more or less keeps doing the same thing over and over, be that shopping, dancing, live music or the perennial favorite SL pursuit, BDSM. Some say they look for love, others seem more or less to duplicate their RL. Reading SL profiles, you quickly learn that "drama-free" most often means someone likes to blame others for the drama they cause. There are so many stereotypes in profiles.

The stereotypes can run much, much deeper though. Just days ago, I spoke to Jullianna Juliesse about her rant (see "The Girl Opines" in this issue), and how one might do research for it. Since she is debunking BDSM dominants, going to places like the Bondage Ranch seemed an obvious place to start. Julie declined, but my own mischievous streak won

through. I teleported into the Ranch, wearing a cocktail dress and knee high boots, and mingled with the crowd. And the predictable happened -- someone tapped my naughty box, complimented me and slowly checked me out. Eighteen minutes into the conversation (I timed it!), he learned I was not available and proceeded to blame me for wasting his time, asking me to spend my time at a safe hub, to go solicit someplace else. I should not be there, leading him into temptation. Well now...

I admit to being there so I could see what would happen. I admit to being provocative. But what is a reasonable expectation? Is my mere presence there enough to form the assumption that I am available? Does it justify the verbal sparring match we went through afterwards? Are we so set in our patterns that dressing as I would for my favorite blues joint be seen as provocative?

I wondered about it, because the behavioral standards that my new acquaintance sought to impose were downright medieval. I did ask him about that too, saying I did not live in a convent, nor in Afghanistan, nor in Gor. The answer was I should wear a veil and quit being so testy.

I started thinking back to other conversations I've had with relative strangers. The diversity of the groups on my profile was mentioned often, but not always as a positive thing. Can it be you have to neatly fit into a drawer so people can be comfortable?

According to my friend, the profile junkie, you could be a lover/dancer, for example. This means you would not venture far beyond music venues and the occasional sex sim. Profile text, groups, even dress would tell the same story. People would know just exactly what to do with you.

And there is a social experiment I do not know how to pull off: finding out if a limited life is more pleasant than a diverse one. Can it be that we are we scared of our freedom?

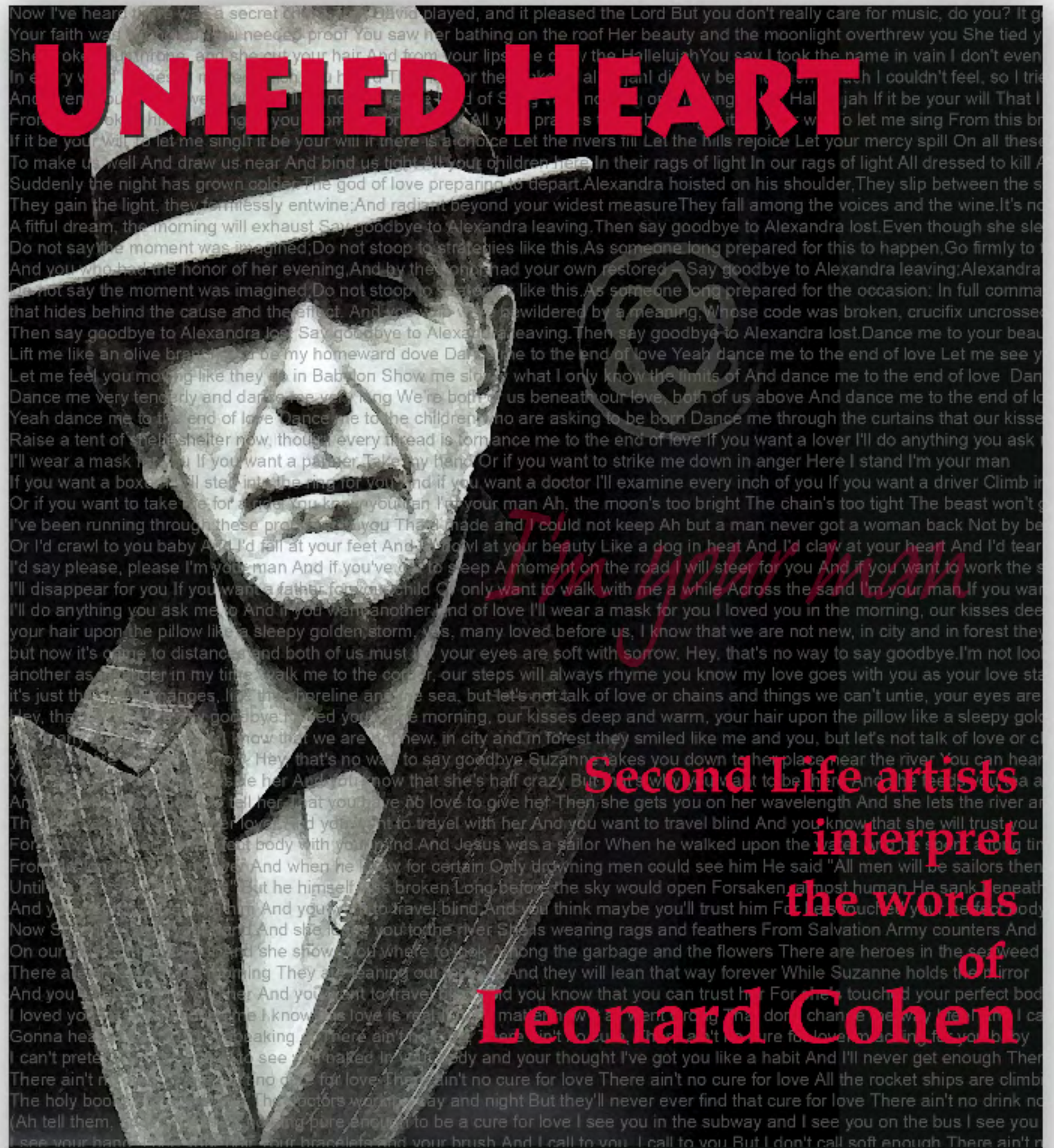


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Swan Lake

My girlfriend said we're going to Swan Lake on Friday night.

Good. It's been a while since I've been hunting.

She's always chewing me out for killing animals, making me do all these high-falootin' society ballets and symphonies.

She's finally come around and seen things my way.

I packed my shotguns, ammo, gear, and other essentials into the truck and drove to her place to pick her up.

She was made up and dressed up all gorgeous.

"Honey, you look wonderful, but that's gonna get all messed up at the lake," I said.

Thank God I didn't load the shotguns.

Crap Mariner

Seeds

On the eve of her return to the land of the living, Hades thanked Persephone for her company.

He handed her a map with some wine and food, in case she got hungry along the way.

The next morning, Persephone began her journey.

It took longer than the journey to Hell, and she sat by a stream to rest.

She drank some wine, ate some food.

Then she realized: it was the rest of that apple.

"Six more seeds," grinned Hades. "That makes twelve. The world is mine."

Far above them, leaves turned brown again, and snow began to fall.



About the author: You can find Crap Mariner wandering around Second Life as a deranged wind-up surrounded by an aura of whirling gears on Edloe island, overlooking Nowhereville and the rest of the Five Islands Group. In his own words, "I am me. Some people find this intolerable, and an outrage. Fuck them. There; that's my bio." Visit his website for more crap: www.firstlife.isfullofcrap.com

Dick

I suck dick
It is not pornographic
It is not nastiness
It is so far from that
It's hard for me to parse
Why people love to talk
Meanly
About sucking and fucking dick.

Even calling it that
It's callous
and it's cold
I will not drown this poem
By calling it "Love"
Even though
sometimes it is, it was.
I will just say
How could it be dirty?
How could it be wrong
To lean in
And breathe another person's skin
And then....
To just take care of him?

Sucking dick
It is not pornographic
It is kindness embodied.
Man, he is not sensitive
He will finish
Regardless
Of your skill
Or your intention,
But how much better is it
To take him in,
To use your whole tongue
To use your throat,

To create a vacuum
In which he can drown
Not his cock
But his human soul
Which longs to go
Back home...
As do we all.

You can make this happen
At least
For a small time
You can bring him
Far into your throat
Then relax your muscles
So he can go
Just
That
Much
Farther.
Then slowly
Close in
Fit yourself to him
And begin
To sing him
the song
for which he has longed
since before he can remember.

It goes like this:

It says,
Baby,
my man.
You are safe
And you are human
All is well
I am here

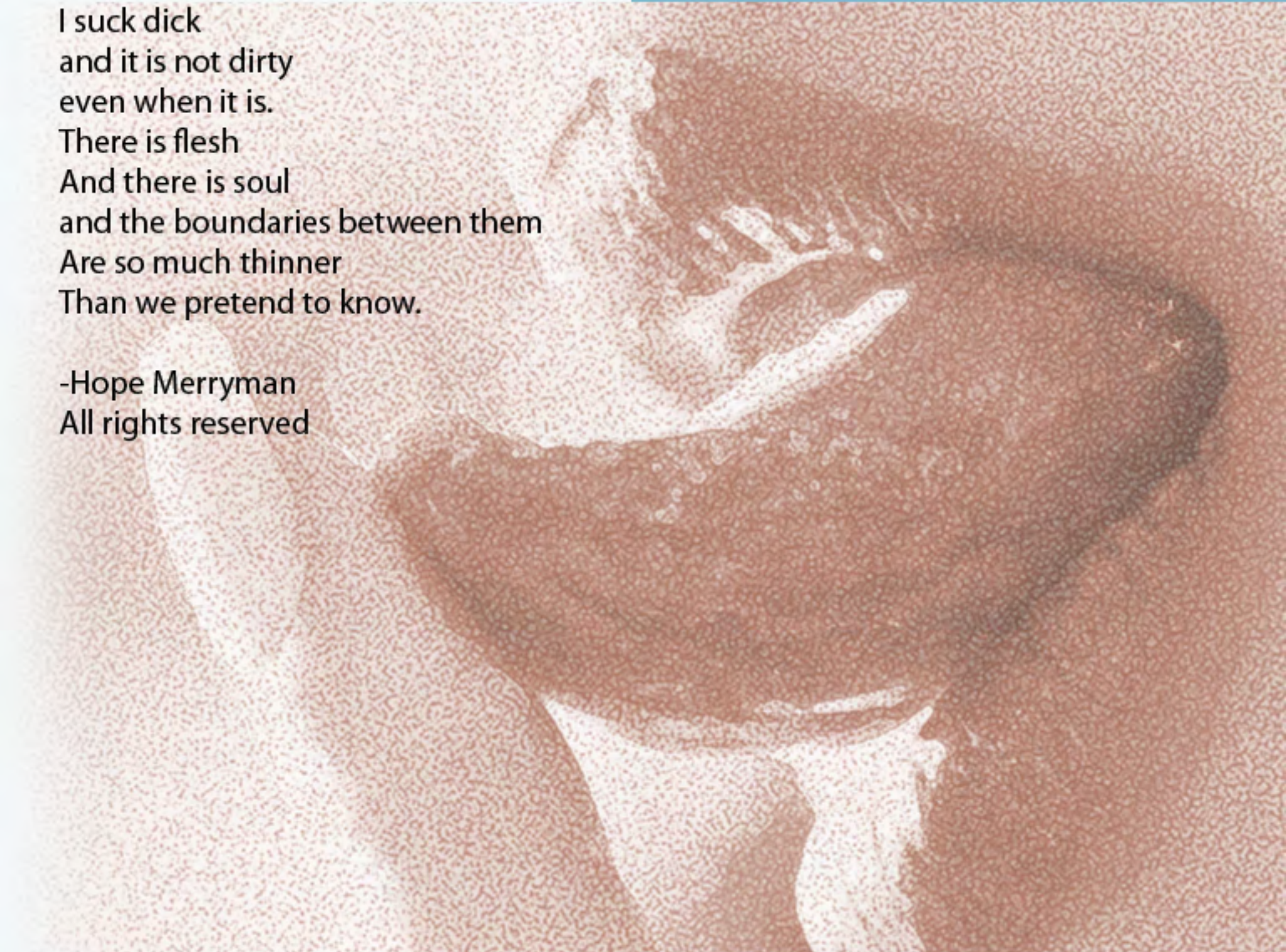
All is well
I am the wall
Between you and grief and silence
and Baby, know this:
there has never been anyone like you
there has never been anything like
this.

This is what you tell him
with your heart in your lips
When you're the kind of girl who
loves to suck dick.

I suck dick
and it is not dirty
even when it is.
There is flesh
And there is soul
and the boundaries between them
Are so much thinner
Than we pretend to know.

-Hope Merryman
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Hope Merryman is a poet in SL and a Ph.D. candidate in RL. She prefers the former to the latter. Hope writes primarily free verse and spoken word. Influences include poets, authors and musicians, including Andrea Gibson, Chris Pureka, Ani Difranco, Mary Oliver, and Eleanor Lerman. Before joining SL in December 2008, Hope hadn't done any creative writing in ten years. She is grateful to the Lindens and to poets such as Persephone Pheonix and House Ragu for inspiring her to try her hand at poetry.



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